

Dear Joe - If I already sent you
this I apologize - if I didn't I
meant to. Don

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TO: Collectors Of Old Radio Programs

A TAPE TRADE OFFER ON "CLARA, LU AND EM": A COMEDY-SOAPER FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO.

After a year's diligent search, I have available for trade what appear to be the only recordings extant of "Clara, Lu and Em", a Chicago-based program dating back to the '30s. This program was a unique, topical "comedy-soap opera" written and performed by three sorority sisters from Northwestern University.

What I have are Master Tapes, 2nd generation dubs of tape copies of air-check discs (recordings made at the studio while the program was being broadcast live) from 1934, '35, '36 and '42. The programs vary in length from 12 - 15 minutes; in addition there are two shorter excerpts from other shows in the series. The programs are all quite understandable, but there are some flaws in many of them (a few skips, occasional surface noise and/or hum, occasional breaks in continuity: quality rating ranges from G to VG+. Total time: 2½ hrs.

I am offering for trade the total package of "Clara, Lu and Em" plus, if you wish, a 2nd generation dub of the audition disc of "Three Sheets To The Wind" starring Brian Donlwy and Helga Moray (again, sound quality is G+/VG with surface noise; but quite clear); the total of approximately 3 hours only in the following manner:

If you respond to this offer, you will receive a set of my Master Tapes (Sony or Scotch) at 7 1/2 or 3 3/4 ips, to dub onto your tape. In exchange, I want my choice of 2 hours of taped material from your catalog or supplements on your tape (½ track, or ¼ track using outside tracks only), 1.5 mil Mylar of the ~~Concert~~, Shamrock, Saxitone type; or, at my discretion, 2 blank new reels of such tape as described. *Capitol*

As I wish to capitalize on this material only so as to add wanted programs to my collection without taking on additional dubbing obligations, I am making my Masters available on a "Dub and Pass It On" basis, with only the following conditions to be observed:

1. When you receive my Masters, you have 5 days to dub onto your tape and send the Masters on to the next person I designate. Use Special 4th Class Rate plus Special Handling, or 1st class, if you prefer.
2. Send me a card showing your name, date Masters received, date Masters sent on, and to whom.
3. If anything unforeseen happens to the Masters, notify me immediately and return the Masters to me. I have provided a brief opening announcement from the first program on each side of the reel to use as a sound level indicator; you can adjust your receiving recorder to that announcement, then turn on the recorder to do its dubbing.
4. I ask you to refrain from listing or trading these programs until the "Pass It On - Robin" cycle has been completed, or until Dec. 31, 1971, whichever is earlier.
5. Any correspondence regarding this material and which requires a reply from me must include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. I will furnish copies of program information to each person who wants to borrow my 2nd generation Master Tapes.

"PRESENTING THAT AMUSING, LAUGHABLE TRIO OF LOVABLE HOUSEWIVES: CLARA, LU AND EM."

"Clara, Lu and Em" was a honey, topical and humorous radio serial which originated from Chicago during Radio's Golden Age. The idea for this series was conceived by three sorority sisters at Northwestern University. For their plots, they drew on the news of the day tied to the everyday life situations of "typical mid-America" families. Their characterizations as unsophisticated, ungrammatical "small town" ladies made their political and other topical commentary all the more appealing to their nation-wide audience.

"Clara, Lu and Em" began as a daily serial in 1930 on WGN and the NBC network, and it ran until 1937. CBS revived it in 1942. In 1945, the program ended because, as Mrs. Helen King Mitchell ("Em") said, the country became so serious about topical and political humor that it "became impossible to write our spontaneous brand of it."

Through the graciousness of the family of Mrs. Mitchell, who died in 1970, several recordings of the "Clara, Lu and Em" program have been made available in tape copies. The recordings are, so far as is known, the only ones in existence. They are described below. All are tape copies of recorded air checks, disc-to-tape transfers made full-track at 7½ ips, second generation dubs made on half-track at 7½ ips and again at 3 3/4 ips. Present available master tapes are second generation dubs.

"AND NOW, JUST FOR FUN, LET'S LISTEN TO 'CLARA, LU 'N' EM' " (1934,1935,1936,1942)

Group One. Four complete broadcasts from 1934-36, sponsored by Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Co. Air-check recordings (metal discs) off WGN (NBC, Chicago). Time: approx. 15 min. each. Quality: ranges from VG+ to G within a program; occasional s/n and hum; a few skips. Despite minor recording and transfer faults, all programs are very understandable. Titles in quotes are as hand-written on the discs.

1. 7/05/34. (Thurs. AM) Clara, Lu and Em are in NYC; they take an inexpensive ride in a hansom cab; eat popcorn, get thirsty, comment on the big city, and finally enjoy the ride. Announcer is "Tiny" Ruffner. String ensemble plays theme. Palmolive Soap commercials.
2. 6/28/35. (Fri. 9:15 AM, CDST) "Lu's Passport; Clara and Em's Presents for Lu's Wedding." Lu gets her passport for her honeymoon trip to Sweden with her husband-to-be Valmer. Clara and Em discuss their wedding gifts to Lu. Announcer: Jean Paul King. Super Suds commercials. Special Contest: weekly prizes of a 1935 Packard or \$1000. Organ theme.
3. 7/01/35. (Mon. 9:15 AM) "Lu About to be Married; Florabelle with Measles." In sequence. Last of present series, but sponsor assures us the program will return in the fall. Abrupt opening organ theme. The girls make final plans for Wednesday's wedding. Lu opens her gifts from Clara and Em; then gets news that her daughter Florabelle has been exposed to the measles. (Lu is a widow) Ann.: Jean Paul King.
4. 1/06/36. (Mon. 4:45 PM, CST) "Men Is the Weaker Sex; Charley Couldn't Be President." Em tells that the Mayo Clinic reports men to be the weaker sex; the girls discuss the implications of these findings on mankind and on womankind. Clara is sure her husband could never be President having read what FDR was expected to wear to official function. (Lu is still a widow, so last year's wedding must have fallen through.) Ann.: Jean Paul King. Palmolive Soap. Special offer: complexion brush. Full embellished organ theme. "WGN - Tribune Square, Chicago"

The Cast of Characters in all the above: Clara - Louise Starkey Wood, Lu - Isabelle Carothers Berolzheimers, Em - Helen King Mitchell. The organist for most of the series was Porter Reaps.

Group Two. Eight incomplete broadcasts from the 1942 CBS revival of "Clara, Lu and Em." Sponsor: Pillsbury Mills. Air-check recordings off WBBM ("the WBBM Air Theater, Wrigley Building, Chicago"). Times vary from 5 min. to 13 min. Quality: ranges from VG+ to G within a program; occasional s/n and hum; occasional break in continuity; some abrupt openings and closings. Almost all program material is quite clear. In this series, even the Pillsbury commercials are topical.

1. 6/08/42. (Mon. 10 AM, Central). First show of revival. Full opening introduces the ladies. Clara finds 10 lbs. of sugar she did not declare to the Ration Board; Lu and Em try to help her out as best they can. Em tells about her wish to raise bees and talks about the new ceiling prices. The announcer is Bret Morrison. (Ed. Note: WACS' were organized on this date.) T: 13 min.
2. 7/31/42. (Fri. 10 AM.) Full opening with organ theme; full closing theme, but all commercials are edited in progress. Loretta Doolittle calls to say she's a grandmother. Clara, Lu and Em discuss baby gifts; V-Mail, "Japs", the WACS' arrival at Des Moines; and plane spotters ("watchers"), as well as Em's kids. Ann.: Bret Morrison. T: 13 min.
3. 9/23/42. (Wed. 10 AM) Abrupt theme opening. Full commercial ("Farina - for good grades in school"). Clara is ill and Lu and Em try to help out; Clara recovers in spite of their "help." (Clara does not appear in this nor in subsequent shows of this series.) No ending comm'l. Ann.: Morrison. T: 12 m.
4. 11/09/42. (Mon. 10 AM) Full opening and commercial (Use Pillsbury for Baking Powder Biscuits). Em's son Junior wants to go to the Harvest Hop, is short of money, wants to take Nancy instead of Mildred Doolittle. Mrs. Doolittle calls Em to talk about Junior and Mildred. Lu and Em discuss newspaper etiquette columns. Ann.: Morrison. No ending. T: 8 min.
5. 11/13/42. (Fri. 10 AM) Full opening and commercial (Pillsbury Flour is good to use on Fri. the 13th or any day). Em is planning a party for Junior on Sat. and wants to rent a horse and wagon for a hay ride. Lu and then Ella (a new character) join in the planning for a "really old-fashioned party." One idea leads to another, and they end up reliving their teenage fun with a rousing square dance call. Lu exclaims "Them was the days!" (Great nostalgia here) Ann.: Morrison. Comm'l for Jr. Red Cross cut. T: 12 min.
6. 11/16/42. (Mon. 10 AM) In sequence. No opening theme or commercial. Announcer Morrison leads into story. Em and Lu discuss the Sat. night party. Grandpa Snead comes over to complain about the party's noise and about politics (he's a die-hard Republican and Em's a Democrat; Lu's an Independent). The Republicans showed some strength; Clare Booth and Tom Dewey won their elections. Political talk shifts to the protective tariff, then to the busts of the vice-presidents in Washington. Full closing and patriotic commercial (An "E" award goes to Pillsbury). Ann.: Morrison. T: 12 min.
7. 12/02/42. (Wed. 10 AM) Full opening and commercial (Pillsbury Pancake Flour with the Four "Colonel" Flavor). It's nearing Christmas. Em and Lu discuss department store hours, schools for Santa Clauses, and gifts. Em wants to know Ella's foot size; and she and Lu try to find out, casually, when Ella comes over. All discuss gas rationing. Story ending is cut. Full closing commercial. Announcer is now Dan Donaldson. T: 13 min.
8. 12/04/42. (Fri. 10 AM) In sequence. This is the last show of a six months' revival. No opening; program in progress. Em and Lu discuss the 4-H Show. Grandpa asks Em to keep some fresh ham for him till Christmas (it's a live pig). Em signs off ~~for~~ the girls' entire families. Ann.: Dan Donaldson. T: 5 min.

Even though Clara does not appear in most of these programs, continuing reference is made to her. The actors appearing as Grandpa and Ella are not yet identified.